

TIME

THE PRESS

that Candidate Kennedy had been told about the Cuban invasion plan and adopted it as his own. This, said Nixon, forced him to oppose an invasion plan, even though he favored it (TIME, March 30). The Scripps-Howard New York *World-Telegram*, a staunch 1960 supporter of Nixon, commented dryly: "One especially wonders how he'd have explained himself if he had been elected President—committed and willing to execute the Cuba plan that he had denounced as 'dangerously irresponsible.'"

Last week the left-wing *Nation* triumphantly flushed another controversy from

loser. Columnist Marquis Childs of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* recently compared Nixon to Thomas E. Dewey as a man with a losing habit.

Sighting-in on Nixon seemed so simple that some of the newsmen's barbs were tipped not with poison but with pity. "Everything he says or does these days seems to go wrong," wrote the New York *Times's* Washington Bureau Chief James Reston from San Francisco last week. "The harder he runs, the more he stumbles. Even in his home state after all these years, he seems trapped by that old familiar but vague charge that 'there is something about him that troubles me.' One hears it all again, like the echo of the past in a tragic play."

Barbed Pity

The press's unlove affair with Richard M. Nixon is longstanding. In the 1960 presidential campaign, it could almost be measured on the air, like humidity. It was not that most of the reporters traveling with him were Democrats (as most of their publishers were Republicans). There were also marked differences in atmosphere in the two candidates' camps that made for subtle influences in reporting: Kennedy and his advisers were available and affable; Nixon seemed suspicious of the press during the campaign and was often reclusive.

This year, as he hit the political comeback trail, an early aspirant to the governorship of California, Dick Nixon set out to patch his relations with the press. He smiled as readily at reporters as he did at supermarket crowds. An aide carefully took pictures of him clapping the hands of assorted reporters and sent each autographed copies. When Nixon's book, *Six Crises*, was published, the candidate sent inscribed volumes to political reporters all over the state.

All started promisingly, but reporters remained distant, unfriendly, aloof. To hear them tell it, Nixon was soon slipping badly. Though all over California Nixon was getting good crowds, flocking to shake hands with him and applaud the distinguished native son, the latest California poll seemed to bear out the reporters' suspicions. The new Mervin Field poll shows Democrat Pat Brown for the first time ahead, 45% to 42%, with 13% undecided (in the last count, in February, Nixon led 47% to 45%).

Doubt & Triumph. Nixon's book, so patently timed to help with his comeback, was also running into trouble. First there had been the dustup over the book's accusation (denied by the CIA)



CAMPAIGNER NIXON

The copies came autographed.

Nixon's book, "Richard M. Nixon," it said, "has just kicked a large hole in his—and the Government's—case against Alger Hiss." The hole, Nixon's statement that FBI agents in December 1948 had found the old Woodstock typewriter that was instrumental in establishing Hiss's guilt. Nixon's statement contradicted the FBI's sworn testimony during the trial that the typewriter (later produced by the defense) had never been in FBI hands. When this was pointed out, Nixon blamed his error on a researcher.

"Echo of the Past." Then came the headlines over Nixon's "carpetbagger" cries at Jack Kennedy when the President flew in to California to make a non-political speech. The Los Angeles *Times*, once as loyal a Nixonite as Pat Nixon herself, frowned disapprovingly. Wrote James Bassett, the *Times's* political analyst—and Nixon's chief press officer in 1956: "Nixon's mistake lay in the timing of his remarks. President Kennedy very definitely was in California on high-plane, nonpolitical business."

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seven months away, much of the press is already talking of Nixon as a potential